

### **Remarks**

Claims 1-13 and 16-27 are pending in the application. Claims 1-8, 18-19, 22, 24-27 have been amended. The Abstract has been amended. Reconsideration and re-examination of the application is respectfully requested.

1. The Examiner has objected to the Abstract for not complying with MPEP § 608.01(b). The Abstract has been amended, as suggested by the Examiner. Removal of the objection to the Abstract is therefore respectfully requested.

2. The Examiner has objected to claims 1-13 and 16-23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,753,861 issued to Hansen et al.

Claim 1 has been amended to state that the sleeve has “an initiating part removably secured to one end of the support to hold the sleeve in a deformed state, the initiating part being stretched to a greater extent than a remainder of the sleeve when the initiating part is secured to the one end of the support, the initiating part being locally relaxed in isolation from the remainder of the sleeve when the initiating part is initially unsecured from the one end of the support, the sleeve being driven away from the one end of the support after the initiating part is locally relaxed by an impetus such that the sleeve covers the object and the support is removable from the sleeve.”

Claim 27 has been amended to state that the method of enclosing the object includes “placing a support having an elastically deformable sleeve extending there over over the object; securing an initiating part of the sleeve to one end of the support to hold the sleeve in a deformed state, the initiating part being stretched to a greater extent than a remainder of the sleeve when

the initiating part is secured to the one end of the support; unsecuring the initiating part from the one end of the support to locally relax the initiating part in isolation from the remainder of the sleeve; driving the sleeve away from the one end of the support after the initiating part is locally relaxed by an impetus to cover the object; and removing the support from the sleeve.”

Hansen et al. teaches a support 16 with an elastic sleeve 12 in a highly stretched radially expanded state (column 5, lines 11-14 of Hansen et al.). The elastic sleeve has outer portions 13, 14 folded back onto the sleeve 12 (column 5, lines 14-15 of Hansen et al.). To cover a cable inserted in the support 16, outer portions 13, 14 of the sleeve are slid on the underlying sleeve 12 longitudinally away from a center of the support 16 until the outer portions 13, 14 cover the cable 1 (columns 5-6, lines 64-3 of Hansen et al.). The support 16 *remains* within the sleeve 12 after the sleeve is unfolded to cover the cable 1 (Fig. 4). The support 16 may also be provided with stress relief means that reduce stress on the sleeve 12 when the sleeve 12 is covering the cable 1 (Abstract of Hansen et al.). Unlike the claimed invention, the sleeve 14 of Hansen et al. does not have an initiating part removably secured to one end of the support 16 that holds the sleeve 12 in a deformed state and is stretched to a greater extent than a remainder of the sleeve 12. Additionally, the sleeve 12 of Hansen et al. does not have an initiating part that is locally relaxed in isolation from the remainder of the sleeve when the initiating part is initially unsecured from the one end of the support 16. Further, the support 16 of Hansen et al. is not taught as being *removed* from the sleeve 12 when the sleeve 12 covers the cable 1. Hansen et al. therefore does not teach all of the elements of claim 1 or claim 27. Removal of the rejection of claim 1 and claim 27 is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 2-13 and 16-23 depend from independent claim 1. Claims 2-8, 18-19, and 22 have been amended in view of the amendments to claim 1. Claims 24-26 depend from

independent claim 27. Claims 24-26 have been amended in view of the amendments to claim 27. As previously discussed, Hansen et al. does not teach all of the elements of claim 1 or claim 27 and therefore does not teach all of the elements of claims 2-8, 18-19, 22, and 24-26. Removal of the rejection of claims 2-8, 18-19, 22, and 24-26 is therefore respectfully requested.

In view of the amendments and arguments presented herein, the application is considered to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and passage to issue is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or needs further clarification, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

FITZGERALD et al., Applicants

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Mae Slonaker", written over a horizontal line.

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